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Peter Pea

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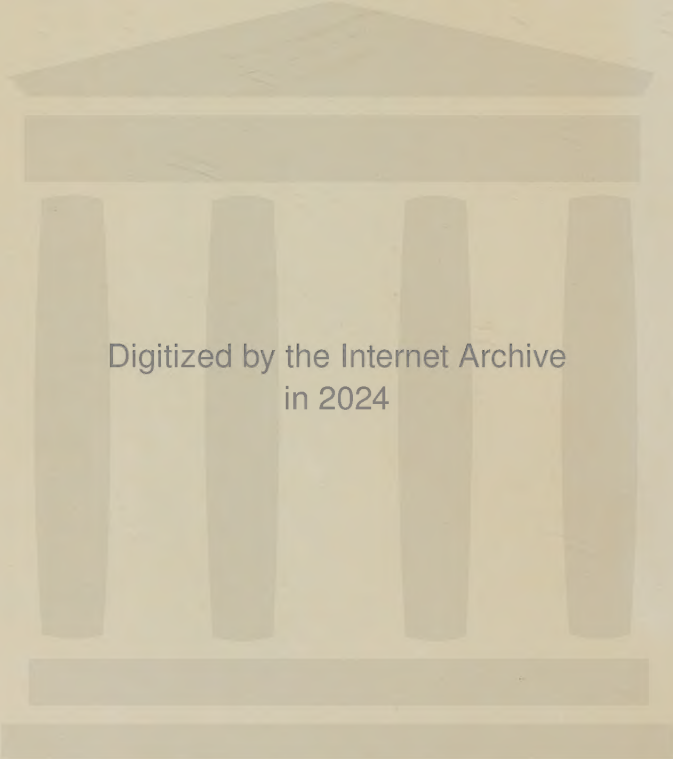
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TO

**FRIENDS  
OF ACPL**





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**PETER-PEA**  
**ONE OF NURSE MASHA'S RUSSIAN TALES**



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U. S. 680008

TO

ETHEL RICHARDSON

*I wish to put this little book into your hands  
as a kind of life-saving medal in appreciation  
of the great courage and responsiveness you  
have shown ever since I first met you.*



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**PETER-PEA**  
**ONE OF NURSE MASHA'S RUSSIAN TALES**







## PETER-PEA

Once upon a time, long, long ago, and far, far away, there lived somewhere an old woman whose name was Marya and an old man whom they called Matvey. They lived in a village and had a pretty little house and a garden with all kinds of fruit-trees and berries in it. And they had a gray horse, Syvka, and a brown cow, Mashka, and some sheep, black and white, and some pigs, and geese, and ducks, and chickens, and a beautiful cock that could crow very loud, and a

## PETER - PEA

lazy old cat, Moorka, and a shaggy gray dog, Voltshok.

Matvey and Marya were very kind, nice old people, and they might have been very happy, but were not, because they had no children.

Bad children are a great nuisance, and even the best boys and girls cannot help being naughty sometimes, you know; yet grown-up people somehow love children and a house without a single child in it seems to be a queer and sad thing, like a wood without any birds to sing in it, or a rattle without anything in it to make it rattle.



MARYA





## PETER - PEA

That is what it seems to me, at least, and Matvey and Marya thought exactly as I do, and those thoughts made them feel sad and lonely almost every day of their life, in spite of all the jolly animals they had.

Well, one day in spring Matvey went out into the field to till the ground and Marya remained at home. The cat and dog were with her in the house, but they were sleeping quietly before the fire, and did not see Marya begin to weep bitterly—she felt so sad and lonely. She wept for quite a long while till it was time to start getting dinner

## PETER - PEA

ready; then she wiped her eyes and set to work.

She put a kettle of water on the table and a bag of peas, for she was going to make pea-soup. She took a handful of peas out of the bag and put them into the kettle, and while she was doing so one little pea slipped from her fingers and fell to the table, and rolled over its edge onto the floor, and on towards the stove where the dog and cat were lying.

The dog lifted its head and looked at the pea and the cat stretched out its paw and gave the pea a little stroke that made it roll back again.

## P E T E R - P E A

“Ah, me!” sighed Marya. “Look at that little pea how it rolls and runs. One might think it was alive! Oh, if it were alive, and were a little boy, and were my own darling son! How happy I would be to have a boy even as small as a pea!”

While she was saying this to herself, the pea had rolled up to her feet and stopped there.

“Well,” said Marya, “there you are, little pea. Well, I do not want you to be lost. I will put you into the kettle with the others.”

She bent down and picked up the little pea, but felt all at once

## PETER - PEÀ

that something was moving and stirring between her fingers, as a beetle does, you know, when you hold one in your hand.

“That is too bad,” said Marya. “Now I have cried myself half-blind, and have seized a beetle instead of a pea.”

And she was going to throw away the thing she was holding in her fingers, when all at once that thing began to speak with a very tiny human voice.

“No, no! I am not a beetle, and no pea either! I am your own little boy, Mother. Please do not throw me away!”

## PETER - PEA

Marya put the little speaking thing on the table, and there it was really a little live boy, as small as the little pea had been, that had rolled about on the floor. And a handsome little boy, too, it was, with yellow hair, and red cheeks and blue eyes. He stood firmly on his little legs and said, "Yes, I am your little boy, Mother, and if you want to keep me, and will love me and take care of me now that I am small, I am sure to take care of you and Father when I grow up."

Marya laughed with joy and said every caressing, kind word she knew, to the little boy; and the



## PETER - PEA

dog barked, and the cat purred; and just then in came Matvey, and he, too, began to say nice things to the little boy on the table, and every one in the room made lots of noise and was happy.

Then Marya made a lovely shirt and trousers for the little boy, out of the finest linen she could find, and Matvey cut him a rocking-bed out of a walnut-shell and a porridge-bowl out of a cherry-stone. It was very hard to make a spoon small enough for the little boy, but Matvey tried and tried till he had made one as small as it should be, and very pretty and handy, too.



MATVEY



## PETER - PEA

Shoes and stockings they could not make for him, but everybody thought that he could perfectly well run about barefooted, as a great many boys and girls do in Russia.

It was difficult to choose a name for such an extraordinary little boy; he was so unlike other children because of his size, and not one of the names the old people could think of seemed to fit him.

“We will call him Peter,” said Matvey.

“No,” said Marya; “such a long name will not do for such a darling little child. Let us call him Pea, for he was a pea before he became a boy.”

## PETER - PEA

“What a clever woman you are, my dear!” said Matvey. “That is a fine name indeed, short and pretty, and quite new, too. No one was called Pea before. But I do like the name of Peter.”

“Then let us call him Peter-Pea,” suggested Marya.

“A splendid name,” agreed Matvey.

And so the little boy was called Peter-Pea.

Matvey and Marya were very happy to have him and loved him very much, and he deserved it, too. He could not do much to help them because of his size, you know,



## PETER - PEA

but he was so nice and so cheerful to everybody, running about the house, playing and singing and chatting all day long. The cat and the dog were very fond of Peter-Pea, too, and learned to be very careful not to put their paws on him when he was on the floor.

To walk the floor from one wall to the other was quite a long trip for Peter-Pea, for he could take only very small steps, even when he was running as fast as he could, and Matvey had to make ladders for him to climb onto chairs and tables and window-sills. On the window-sills flowers had been put

## PETER - PEA

in boxes and pots, and in one box Marya had planted peas. When their stems were long enough, she put prettily painted green and red sticks between them and arranged a charming little pea-bower for her little Pea-boy. The window-sills were Peter-Pea's gardens, you see, for he was not allowed to go out into the real garden outside the house. Matvey and Marya thought this too dangerous for him—he might get lost in the grass, or a chicken might pick him up and swallow him, or the neighbor's cat might crush him with its paw, or the wind might blow him away, or

## PETER - PEA

it might begin to rain and he might be drowned in a rain-water pool. The old people simply would not let him leave the house, and this was a great grief to Peter-Pea.

It had taken him quite a long time to go all over the house and explore every nook and corner in it, but at last he had done it and knew everything in the house as well as you know the things in your home. Now, just think whether you would like it, to be shut up all your life in one room, never to be allowed to step out of it to go into the garden or run about in the street? Peter-Pea did not like

## PETER - PEA

it a bit and sometimes grew quite unhappy looking through the window-panes at other children running about on the village street. He begged and begged his parents to let him go out, but they would not.

“Wait, my darling, till you are grown a little bit taller,” said Marya.

And Matvey added: “Wait, Sonny, till I get a steed of a proper size for you to ride on. I will make a fine saddle of real leather with silver buckles on it, and a blue silk bridle with tassels for you, and then we will let you go on a trip round the world on that steed.”

## PETER - PEA

Matvey knew that no live horse small enough for his little son could ever be found. He said it all only because he thought his words made Peter-Pea less impatient.

Peter-Pea tried to be patient, but it was hard. He tried to eat as much as he could in order to grow, and he did grow. Ere the year was over he had outgrown the tallest pea you ever saw; indeed, he was twice the size of a big pea, but that was not much, after all. Yet he began to get ready for a trip round the world. Out of the broken end of a needle he made himself a sword, and his

## PETER - PEA

mother had to make him a nice round travelling-cap and a new pair of trousers with big pockets in them.

Every day when Matvey came back from his work in the field or in the wood Peter-Pea would ask him: "Well, Daddy, have you found a horse for me?"

And Matvey would shake his head and answer, "Not yet, Peter-Pea, not yet, but we will get one pretty soon, I guess."

Well, one day while Matvey was working in the field and Marya was busy weeding vegetable-beds in the garden, Peter-Pea was sitting alone





THE HOUSE IN WHICH MARYA AND MATVEY LIVED, WITH A STRAW  
ROOF AND A BROKEN MILK-POT FOR A CHIMNEY





## PETER-PEA

in his bower on the window-sill. The plants had fresh green leaves, and little white flowers were opening their petals all over the pea-bower, for it was spring. It was May and the sun shone bright, and the sky was blue, and in the green grass before the house there were more yellow dandelions than Peter-Pea could count.

“It would be nice to climb onto one of those flowers,” thought Peter-Pea, “and to balance to and fro, sitting as if on a golden stool.”

The dog had gone with Matvey into the field, not for work but for fun, it being such a nice day, and

## PETER - PEA

the cat had gone to pay a visit to the neighbor's cat. Peter-Pea heard the sparrows chirp merrily on the roof, but in the house itself there was no one to make noise but himself, and as he sat quite still nothing stirred and not a sound was to be heard.

All at once—there was a big noise, a loud buzzing and humming somewhere over Peter-Pea's head, and something flew through the air and landed with a bang on the window-sill quite near to the place where Peter-Pea was sitting on a bench in his bower.

The little boy got so frightened

## PETER-PEA

that he fell from the bench. What could that be? Matvey had told him about the big, big, grim bears in the wood and how they would growl and roar, when angry.

Perhaps a bear had found his way into the house! **U. S. 680008**

Peter-Pea jumped to his feet and seized his needle-sword just in time, for there was indeed a big animal running to and fro on the window-sill. It was four or five times bigger than Peter-Pea; its stomach was striped black and white and the rest of its body was brown. It had six thin legs and a pair of funny horns on its head with a thing like

## PETER - PEA

a little fan on the end of each. Peter-Pea was not quite sure if a bear ought to have six legs, instead of four, like cats and dogs, and had never heard of bears having funny horns and being able to fly through the air, but he could think of no other animal so big and terrible, and felt certain, therefore, that this was a bear that had sneaked into the house to eat him. He was very much afraid, but resolved to defend himself like a man. His heart beat fast, but he spoke in a firm voice.

“I know you are a bear and want to eat me. But you shall not

## PETER-PEA

because I am going to kill you first with this sword of mine."

The big animal stopped running to and fro and moaned pitifully.

"Oh! Oh!" it said, "I do not want to be killed! I am no bear at all, little grasshopper or whatever sort of thing you are. I eat no grasshoppers, nor beetles, nor flies, nor anything that crawls or flies. I eat delightful green leaves on trees. I am a cockchafer myself and I do not want to be pierced by that sword of yours. Please don't do it!"

"Oh," said Peter-Pea, "you are a cockchafer, are you? But how

## PETER - PEA

did you come into the house and why?"

"Oh," said the cockchafer, "I had fallen asleep in a heap of twigs under an apple-tree in the garden and the old woman that lives in this house picked up the twigs and carried me with them into the house before I had time to say, 'No, thank you, I prefer to stay out of doors.' So I am here and want very much to get out of the house again."

"You do not like it here?" asked Peter-Pea.

"Oh, but most certainly not!" said the cockchafer. "You have a

## PETER-PEA

low wooden ceiling over your head here, and in the garden one has the blue sky for a ceiling, with fine white and gray clouds sailing overhead. Will you be so kind as to let me out into the garden instead of killing me?"

"I will not kill you," said Peter-Pea, "but I do not want you to go away. I like you, and you can stay with me. You can be my horse. You are big enough for it. I will ride on your back and Father will bring you plenty of green leaves to eat."

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" cried the cockchafer. "I do not want to stay

## PETER-PEA

here! You see, in the neighbor-King's garden all the lime-trees stand in full blossom, for it is May. There is going to be a full moon tonight and the cockchafers are going to have a dancing party in the fragrant boughs of the King's largest lime-tree. The King's band is going to play for us, and I have an invitation to the ball, and I simply must go!"

"I should like to go, too!" said Peter-Pea. "I have never been to a party! I could not let you out myself because the doors and windows are too heavy for me to open, but I will tell you something—if you



## PETER-PEA

will let me sit on your back, and if you will promise to take me to the King's garden, and home again—I will ask Mother to let us out when she comes home.”

“All right,” said the cockchafer. “You cannot be very heavy. Let us try!”

Peter-Pea climbed upon the back of the cockchafer and practised riding. He was very light, of course, and it was easy work for the cockchafer to carry him. He tumbled off his horse quite a number of times before he learned to sit firmly, and hurt himself a little, but he did not mind it, as he was so glad to have

## PETER - PEA

a steed at last and so eager to see the King's garden.

Matvey and Marya came home, and Peter-Pea showed them his cockchafer-steed and declared that he would go out for a ride. The old people were afraid to let Peter-Pea go and begged him to stay, but he would not.

"I am taller than the tallest pea now, Mother," he said; "and I have a proper steed, Father! You must keep your promise and let me go."

And they had to do it. Marya filled the pockets of his trousers with cake-crumbs and made him promise to come back soon. He

## PETER - PEA

gave a kiss to his father and mother; said goodby to the dog and the cat; put on his cap; jumped on the cockchafer's back, and off they flew like a little aeroplane through the door which Matvey held open for them.

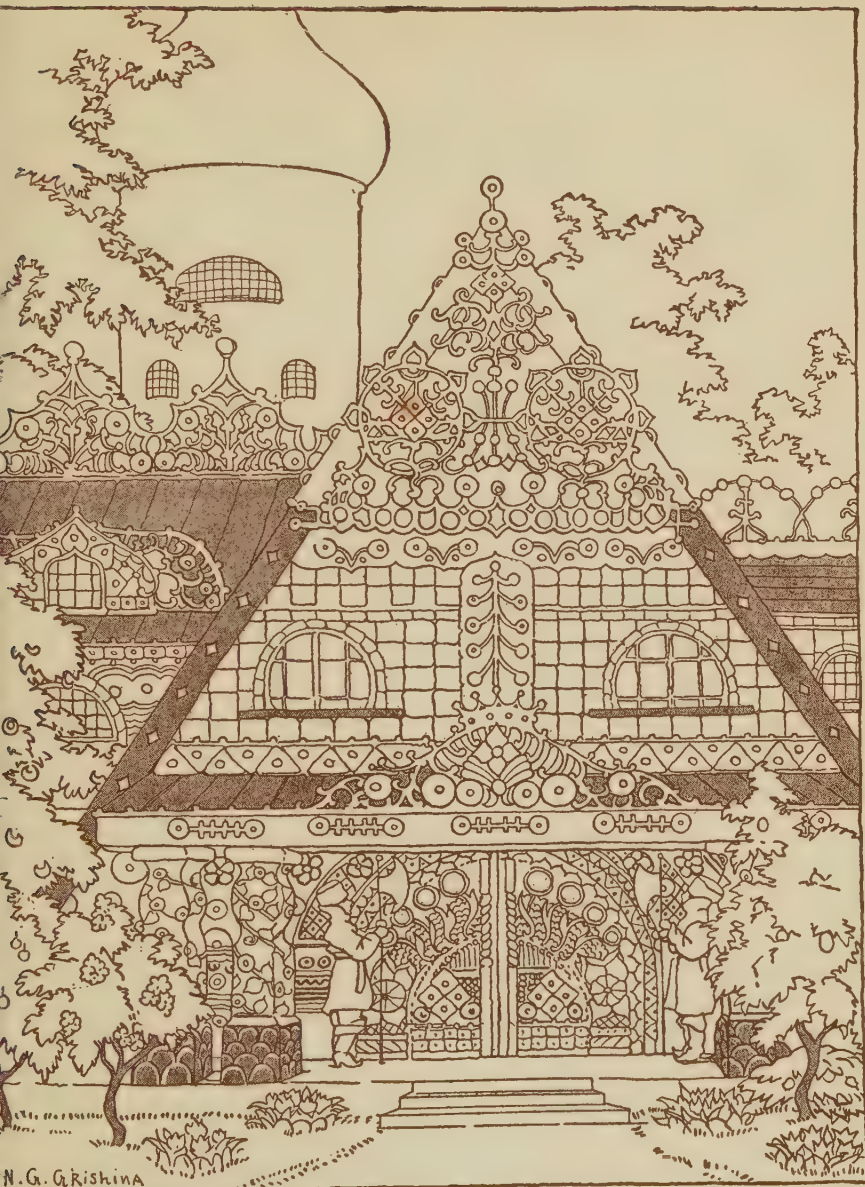
How the cockchafer's wings buzzed and how fast he flew! The wind whistled about Peter-Pea's ears and blew off his cap. Peter-Pea could not catch it because he had to hold on with both hands to the back of the cockchafer. The loss of his cap was no great misfortune, for it was May, you know, and the air was sweet and warm.

## PETER - PEA

High up into the air the cockchafer flew, across the street and over the neighbor's house, and higher still over the tops of the trees, far, far away, across the fields, and over the river and through the wood.

They flew for many hours and stopped to rest on a large leaf of a lime-tree in the wood. The cockchafer munched leaves and Peter-Pea ate up the cake-crumbs. They drank some dew, for the sun was setting and large drops of dew were beginning to form.

It was dusk when they arrived at the King's garden. Peter-Pea saw



THE PALACE WHERE THE PRINCESS LIVED



## PETER - PEA

a magnificent large house with over a hundred windows. That was the King's palace. All the windows were brightly lighted; some were open and gay music sounded through them into the garden.

The cockchafer grew quite excited. "The ball has begun!" he cried. "They have started dancing. Do you hear the music the King's band is making for us beetles?"

"Do you dance in the palace?" asked Peter-Pea.

"No," said the cockchafer. "We dance on the cool green leaves of the biggest lime-tree right in the midst of the garden. Do you see



## PETER - PEA

the crowds of cockchafers flying around it? All the prettiest lady-cockchafers and finest gentlemen-cockchafers are assembled there, and I am somewhat late already. I cannot take you with me, for you cannot fly. You would slip off the leaf and fall down and break your neck, so I will just put you down on earth for a while."

Down went the cockchafer, and landed so abruptly on the garden walk that Peter-Pea could not keep his balance but fell rather roughly onto the sand. The cockchafer helped him to his feet, saying, "I am sorry." Then, promising to come



## PETER - PEA

back after the ball was over, he flew off in a hurry.

Peter-Pea was left alone. The full moon was shining brightly and hundreds of colored lanterns were hanging everywhere on the trees in the King's garden, so it was not dark there.

Peter-Pea looked about. He was standing in the middle of a garden walk that seemed to him to be a very large highway. The earth was strewn with multi-colored sand. Some sand-grains were blue, others pink, red, green, orange and violet. They looked very pretty. The grass on both sides of the walk was

## PETER-PEA

cut very short, but the grass-blades seemed to Peter-Pea to be as tall as trees. Everything around was strange and new to him, but he was not a bit afraid, only hungry, because he had long ago eaten up his crumbs and his pockets were empty.

“Mother and Father must have supper at home about this time,” thought Peter-Pea. “I wonder if they are eating at the palace now, too?”

A frog came creeping over the garden walk at some distance from Peter-Pea. The boy had never before seen a frog.



PETER-PEA HAD NEVER BEFORE SEEN A FROG



## PETER - PEA

“Who may that be?” thought he. “Perhaps it is the King come out to have a stroll in the garden. I will walk up to him and say, ‘Good-evening,’ and maybe he will ask me to come and have supper with him in the palace. They are sure to have nice things to eat there . . .” and he started walking to meet the frog.

A little black beetle ran past him in the same direction.

“That beetle is in a hurry to get an invitation for supper, too,” thought Peter-Pea, and began to run; but the beetle had six legs and could run much faster than the

## PETER-PEA

little boy. He left Peter-Pea a long way behind and was going to run past the frog because he had nothing to say to him, but the frog saw the beetle, stretched out his long tongue, caught him on it and swallowed him, for frogs do eat insects. Peter-Pea stopped running at once. What was that? What had become of the beetle? Peter-Pea thought he had better do without the King's supper. He no longer wanted to ask for an invitation, but turned round and ran as fast as he could to hide in the grass.

The frog did not follow him, but Peter-Pea was very much afraid.

## PETER - PEA

He ran and ran till he came to a rose-bush growing in the lane. It was cold and damp with dew in the grass and Peter-Pea did not feel safe at all there. He thought it a good idea to climb up the stem of the rose-bush to get farther away from the frog; so he climbed and climbed, higher and higher, till he reached a splendid red rose. That seemed to be a fine hiding-place, and Peter-Pea crept into the rose. It was warm and dry there and the fragrant rose-petals were like so many soft silk blankets.

“Well,” thought Peter-Pea, “my cockchafer-horse will certainly not

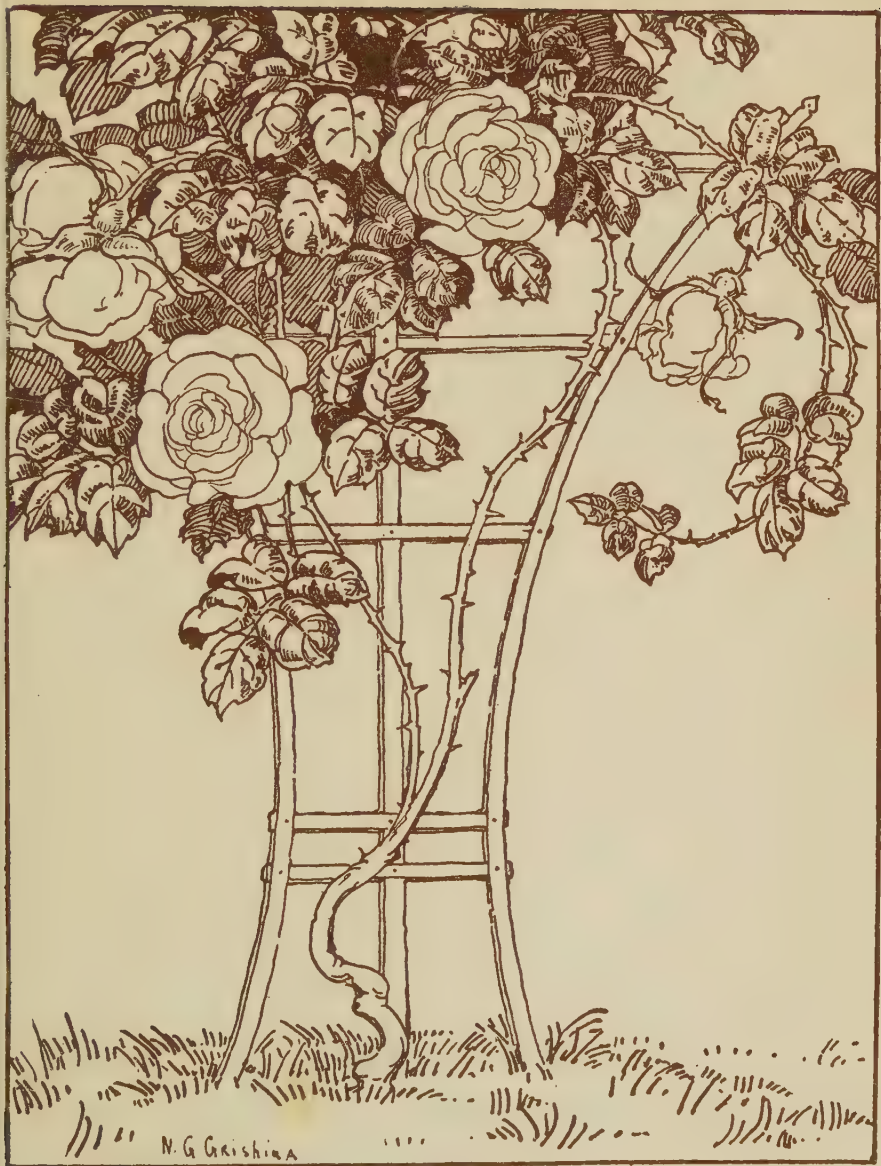
## PETER - PEA

come to take me home before morning, so I had better stay here for the night."

The wind gently rocked the rose on its stem. Peter-Pea was very tired. He forgot all about supper, wrapped himself comfortably into a rose-leaf and was about to fall asleep, when all at once he heard the rose-leaves rustle and something stir right by his side. Oh, how scared Peter-Pea was! He thought that this was the big frog that had followed him!

But it was not. It was an amiable little green beetle that had crept into the rose for a night-





YOU CANNOT SEE PETER-PEA ON THIS PICTURE—BECAUSE HE IS  
HIDING IN THAT ROSE OVER THERE



## PETER-PEA

shelter, too. It said it was very sorry to have disturbed Peter-Pea and asked if he would mind if it stayed in the rose overnight. Peter-Pea answered politely that he was glad to have company, and the two had quite a nice conversation together.

The little green beetle had lived for a long time in the King's garden and had many times been in the palace. It could tell Peter-Pea many interesting things about what it had heard and seen there. It said that the ugly fat thing on the garden walk, that had swallowed the little black beetle, was not the King but a frog.

## PETER - PEA

“One has to be very careful to get out of the way of frogs,” said the friendly beetle, “because they eat all kinds of insects whenever they can get them. The King never eats beetles. He is much bigger than a frog and wears a golden crown on his head. He lives in the palace and has a lovely young daughter. Many a Prince and King have wanted to marry that Princess, but she has a trick of her own to make fun of them. Every day she invents a new riddle and he who guesses that riddle is to be her husband. But the riddles are so cunning that no one can guess them.”

## PETER - PEA

“I could,” said Peter-Pea. “My mother taught me to guess riddles. She knows all the riddles in the world, and on long winter evenings Father and I often used to amuse ourselves guessing them. I think I will guess the Princess’ riddles.”

“Oh, you could not,” said the beetle. “They are too hard! But could not that cockchafer friend of yours that brought you, bring your mother to help you?”

“My mother is too heavy for a cockchafer to carry. No, I will do the guessing myself,” said Peter-Pea.

The little green beetle wished him success, and showed him a

## PETER-PEA

drop of honey in the rose. They had honey for supper and then went peacefully to sleep, while the wind rocked the rose and the King's band made music in the garden.

The sun was high up in the sky the next morning when Peter-Pea awoke. The little green beetle had gone and something had happened to the rose in which Peter-Pea had been sleeping. The King's gardener had come early in the morning to cut flowers for a bouquet for the Princess. He had cut Peter-Pea's red rose and put it in a golden vase with other beautiful flowers on

## PETER - PEA

the breakfast-table of the Princess. Peter-Pea had slept all the while and did not know what had happened to the rose. He heard somebody talking when he woke, and stretched his head out from between the rose-leaves to see who it was. Then he saw that he was in the garden no longer, but in a fine room filled with pretty and curious things he had never seen before. The golden vase with the rose was standing on a table on which were many golden plates and dishes with nice things to eat, and lovely cups and saucers of crystal, and a big golden samovar with a



## PETER - PEA

lovely teapot on top of it. At the breakfast-table were sitting the King and the Princess. The King was a very fat old man, with a shiny gold crown on his bald head, and the Princess was simply the loveliest thing Peter-Pea had ever seen.

“I have a new riddle, Your Majesty, my Father,” said the Princess.

“I cannot understand where you get all those riddles, Your Highness, my Daughter,” said the King. “Is it a hard one?”

“Very hard,” said the Princess, and laughed. “Listen! What is it that is not bigger nor heavier than





"IT IS A SPOOL OF THREAD," SAID THE PRINCESS



## PETER - PEA

a mouse and has a long tail, but the strongest man in the world cannot lift it by that tail? And—I have it in my pocket.”

“Nonsense, my dear!” said the King. “If the thing is not bigger nor heavier than a mouse and has a tail, any one can lift it by that tail.”

“No, no!” cried the Princess. “No one, not even the biggest giant, could do it! Look! Here it is! It is a spool of thread!”

She took a spool of thread from her pocket and put it on the floor. A bit of thread was unrolled from the spool. The Princess pointed to

## PETER-PEA

it and said, "This is the tail. Now try to pick it up by its tail."

The King bent down and took the end of the thread in his fingers, but of course he could not lift the spool that way. The thread began to unwind, as soon as he pulled at it, and the spool just rolled about on the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the King. "You are right! You are a sly girl, and no one will guess that riddle!"

And the Princess laughed, too, and so did Peter-Pea, but no one heard him.

Then came the King's butler and

## PETER - PEA

announced that many Kings and Princes had assembled in the reception-hall and were anxious to begin guessing the riddles.

“How many Kings are there this time?” asked the King.

“Fifty-six, Your Majesty,” answered the butler.

“And how many Princes?”

“One hundred and three, Your Majesty.”

The Princess took a rose from the bouquet on the table, and it so happened that it was exactly the red rose in which Peter-Pea was hiding. With the rose in her hand the Princess went into the reception-

## PETER - PEA

hall and the King followed her. The Princes and Kings who were waiting for them there went down on one knee and bowed to the floor to salute the King.

“Good-morning, gentlemen,” said the King. Then he happened to sneeze, and no sooner did he do it, than everybody in the room began to sneeze. The King blew his nose, and all his guests did the same; for it was the custom in that country that everybody in the King’s presence had to do as the King did. If the King made a wry face, everybody had to look sour, and if he laughed, everybody had

## PETER - PEA

to laugh, and at table everybody had to lift his spoon and fork as many times as the King did, and had no right to have one mouthful more than the King had.

“Do you wish to try to guess my new riddle?” asked the Princess. “And do you know what will happen if you do not guess it? You will have to go hopping on one leg around our garden, and it is very large, you know.”

The Kings and Princes went down on their knees again and said they were ready to begin guessing riddles.

“All right,” said the Princess.

## PETER - PEA

“Guess what I have in my pocket. It is not bigger than a mouse and not heavier, and has a long tail, but the strongest man or the biggest giant could not lift it by that tail.”

The Kings and Princes looked hither and thither, and up to the ceiling and down to the floor in dismay and were silent, for they could not guess the riddle; but Peter-Pea, with his head sticking out of the rose, cried with all his might:

“It is a spool of thread, Princess, that is what it is!”

“Oh, oh!” exclaimed the Prin-



## PETER - PEA

cess. "Where does that funny chirping voice come from?"

"It is a spool of thread! It is a spool of thread!" cried Peter-Pea, and lost his balance and fell from the rose onto the carpet at the feet of the Princess. She picked him up at once. He had not hurt himself, the carpet was so thick and soft.

"What kind of beetle have you got there in your hand?" asked the King.

"It is not a beetle; it is a darling little boy and he has guessed my riddle," said the Princess.

"And that is not all," said Peter-Pea. "Put me down on the carpet

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and give me that spool of thread. I will show you how to pick it up by its tail!"

The King put on his spectacles and everybody crowded around the Princess to see what she was holding in her hand. The Princess crouched down on the floor and cautiously put Peter-Pea back on the carpet and laid the spool of thread before him. Peter-Pea unfastened his sword from his belt and stuck it into the spool. Then he picked up the loose end of the thread, twisted it around the needle, and made a knot at the end of his sword.

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“There,” said he. “You may pick it up now by its tail and lift it as high as you like!”

The King himself took the end of thread in his fingers, and up went the spool, for the thread was pinned fast and could not unroll itself any more. The Princess clapped her hands and cried:

“He has guessed right, and he has done more than that—he has made Father lift the spool by the tail, which none could do before! Of course we shall be married now.”

“But, my dear child!” said the King. “You cannot possibly marry

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that mite of a boy! You will put your foot on him by chance and crush him to death while going to the church!"

"Oh, no, I shall not," said the Princess. "I will carry him like this." And she put Peter-Pea into the palm of her hand and said that he was the smartest and prettiest boy she had ever seen.

The King agreed that the boy was nice to look at and seemed to be more clever than all the Kings and Princes in the room. The King laughed when he said this, so everybody had to laugh with him, and the Princes and Kings had to



THEY HAD TO HOP AROUND THE GARDEN ON ONE LEG



## PETER-PEA

start on their hopping trip round the garden, for they had not guessed the riddle.

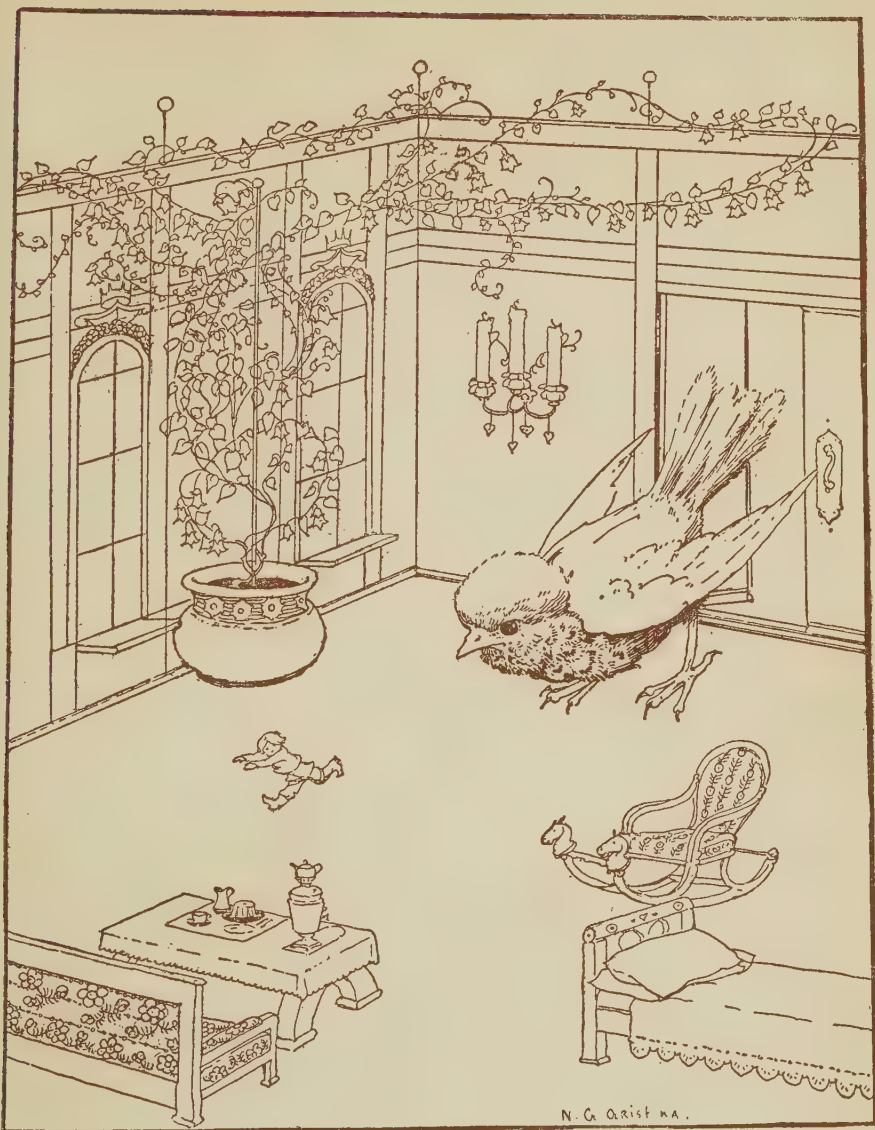
Peter-Pea and the pretty Princess were married at once, and Peter-Pea went to live in the palace. The best tailors and shoemakers had to make new suits and shoes for him of the finest silk, and the Princess herself made stockings for him. The cleverest toy-makers were ordered to make a wonderful doll's-house, with everything in it like in a real house, but small enough for Peter-Pea to use. That doll's-house was called Peter-Pea's palace. It stood in the Princess' room on a table of

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white marble, and lovely flowers and plants in vases and pots were put around it. They were Peter-Pea's garden. There were no frogs in it, but something very unpleasant happened to Peter-Pea on a walk in that garden.

The Princess had a little tame singing-bird for a pet. It lived in a golden cage, but sometimes the Princess would open the door of the cage to let the bird fly about the room to amuse itself, and to exercise its little wings. Well, once when the little bird was flying about in the Princess' room, it saw Peter-Pea walking on the marble





THE BIRD WANTED TO CATCH HIM



## PETER - PEA

table. It wanted to see him better, so it flew down to the table and came hopping up to him, turning its head from side to side, as birds do when they are eager to see something better. The bird took Peter-Pea for a beetle—and birds eat beetles as well as frogs do, you know.

“This is a rather unusual kind of an insect,” thought the little bird, “but I dare say it is quite eatable.”

So it opened its beak and snatched the boy up and would have swallowed him but for the Princess. Peter-Pea cried for help

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as loud as he could. The Princess heard him and came running. She caught the bird, forced its beak open and took Peter-Pea out of it. The little boy was badly hurt but still alive. The Princess put him to bed and wept bitterly over him. When the King saw his daughter cry, he wept, too, so everybody in the palace had to cry. The King's doctors did their best to cure the little boy. Over a hundred of them came to see him, and each one brought some medicine, too.

Peter-Pea was ill for about a week, and the Princess stayed day and night by his bedside. He re-

## PETER -PEA

covered at last and could walk and run, and laugh and sing, as he had before. The Princess was happy again, but she feared Peter-Pea might get into a new scrape.

“Peter-Pea,” she said, “I do not want anything to happen to you. I love you too much! I will order a glass box to be made and I will put you into it. There you will be as safe as a pie in a pastry-cook’s glass box.”

“Oh, no!” said Peter-Pea. “I don’t want you to do that! I don’t want to stay in a glass box! I am not a piece of candy and I would be bored to death! Let us think of something else.”

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“But what shall we do?” said the Princess. “If I do not shut you up in a glass box, a bird, or a mouse, or a cat, or even a spider might get at you at any time!”

“Well,” said Peter-Pea, “you know I was a real, round, green pea before I got to be a boy, and peas, you know, do grow if you put them into earth and do not forget to water them. Just try to plant me in a flower-pot with earth. I might grow—”

“Would not that be lovely!” cried the Princess, and ordered the gardener to bring a tiny flower-pot with the best garden-earth in it.

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Into that earth she planted Peter-Pea so deep that only his little head was to be seen—and he started to grow at once! Overnight he had grown quite a bit, so that the flower-pot became too small for him. What excitement and joy!

The Princess put him into another flower-pot, twice as big as the first one had been—and he outgrew that, too, overnight. Now he was as big as the biggest grasshopper. But he would not stop there, so they planted him in another bigger flower-pot, then in another and another. They had to change at least

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twenty flower-pots, and at last they were obliged to take big wooden barrels, like those used for palm-trees in hothouses in the North. When Peter-Pea climbed out of the twentieth barrel of earth, he was a head taller than the Princess herself.

“That will do,” she said. “I do not want you to grow any more.”

And she brushed the earth off his silken suit that had grown along with him all the time.

Peter-Pea was very glad to be a real, tall young man. He went about the palace looking at himself in every mirror in every room, and



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there were many there, you may believe! After he was through with this he came to the Princess and said:

“My dear, I want to go home to my father and mother. His Majesty the King, your father, has other children besides you, but I am my parents’ only son and I promised them to come back after a while. Moreover, I think that life in my home is more comfortable than in your father’s palace. Each of us sneezes only for himself and we laugh when we think something is funny, not when somebody else does, and we eat as much as we

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want and not as much as somebody else wants. I think you will like my father and mother, and they will be happy to have you for a daughter. And now that I am strong and tall I will be able to help Father with all his work. That will be fun!"

"My dear," said the Princess, "I shall be glad to go with you, and we will take my little bird and all my pretty things with us!"

The King gave them twenty golden carriages, with a pair of beautiful horses to each. They got into the first, and all the others were packed full with all kinds of

## PETER - PEA

lovely things for themselves and for Marya and Matvey. Twenty carriages! You can imagine how many nice things Peter-Pea and his Princess were able to take along with them!

The King's horses could run very fast. Peter-Pea and the Princess left the palace after breakfast and reached Peter-Pea's home just about supper-time. Marya and Matvey had been very unhappy, missing their little boy. The cockchafer had not come to see them again, and they did not know what had become of Peter-Pea.

The day on which Peter-Pea and

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the Princess had left the palace, Marya had cooked pea-soup for supper, but both she and Matvey were so sad, thinking of their lost darling Pea-boy, that they could not eat at all. They sat before the soup-bowl and sighed heavily, and big tears ran down their cheeks.

Then all at once they heard the rolling of many wheels and the clattering of many hoofs. The noise stopped before their house, and when they looked out of the window they saw the golden coaches. And out came Peter-Pea, who was little no longer, and the lovely Princess. They walked into the



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MARYA KNEW AT ONCE WHO THAT TALL YOUNG MAN WAS



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house....and, would you believe it, Marya knew at once who that handsome, tall young man was! She kissed and embraced him, and so did Matvey, and the dog barked and the cat purred. And they kissed and embraced the Princess and liked her very much. And the Princess liked Matvey and Marya very much, and the dog, and the cat, and everything in the house.

After Peter-Pea had told everything about his trip to the palace, and his adventures there, Marya had to warm up the soup, for it had grown quite cold, and then they sat down to supper.

## PETER-PEA

And so they were very happy ever after, living together.

If you happen to go to Russia and ask where Peter-Pea lives, the one who had been a little pea before he became a boy, people are sure to show you the way to his house. Don't forget to give Peter-Pea, and the Princess, and Matvey, and Marya, my greetings when you see them, will you?















